

THERE IS CLAIMED:

1 1. A communication system for a digital television
2 system including an interactive response system in
3 communication with a television of the digital television
4 system, the interactive response system being arranged to
5 accept an input from a user in response to an output
6 signal produced by the television the interactive
7 response system then being operative to trigger a
8 communication between the user and a remote third party,
9 wherein the communication is dependent upon the output
10 signal produced by the television.

1 2. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the interactive response system is one of: a set-top-box,
3 an integrated digital television and a decoder.

1 3. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the interactive response system comprises at least a
3 portion of a set-top-box operating system.

1 4. A communication system according to claim 3, wherein
2 the interactive response system is downloaded into the
3 set-top-box upon first use of the input by a user; and
4 wherein the output signal is produced by a remote control

5 to the set-top box and from the set-top box to a head-
6 end.

1 5. A communication system according to claim 1, further
2 comprising a processing system in communication with the
3 interactive response system, wherein the interactive
4 response system triggers a communication by communicating
5 details of the output signal to the processing system,
6 the processing system being arranged to determine the
7 communication to be triggered in dependence on the output
8 signal and to initiate the communication.

1 6. A communication system according to claim 5, wherein
2 the processing system is arranged to determine the mode
3 of communication in dependence on the output signal.

1 7. A communication system according to claim 5, wherein
2 the processing system is arranged to determine the
3 content of the communication in dependence on the output
4 signal.

1 8. A communication system according to claim 5, wherein
2 the interactive response system communicates with the
3 processing system via a communication network.

1 9. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein
2 the communication network is one of a public service
3 telephone network (PSTN), and a cellular network (PLMN).

1 10. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein
2 the communication network is one of a cable system, a
3 digital satellite television system, a digital
4 terrestrial television system or a broadband network
5 television system.

1 11. A communication system according to claim 5, wherein
2 the processing system is in a location remote to the user
3 and is arranged to serve a plurality of users.

1 12. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the output signal represents one of: an email, an
3 electronic address book, and a voicemail message.

1 13. A communication system according to claim 12,
2 wherein the remote third party is a voice recording
3 system arranged to record a voice message as an
4 electronic file, wherein the interactive response system
5 is operative to trigger a telephone call between a
6 telephone associated with the user and the voice
7 recording system for recording of an electronic file, the

8 communication system being arranged to transmit the
9 electronic file as an attachment to an email to the
10 sender of the output signal.

1 14. A communication system according to claim 12,
2 wherein the remote third party is a telephone associated
3 with the sender of the output signal, wherein the
4 interactive response system is operative to trigger a
5 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
6 user and the telephone associated with the sender of the
7 output signal.

1 15. A communication system according to claim 12,
2 wherein the remote third party is a voicemail system
3 associated with a sender of the output signal, wherein
4 the interactive response system is operative to trigger a
5 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
6 user and the voicemail system.

1 16. A communication system according to claim 1, further
2 comprising a voice recording system arranged to record
3 voice messages as electronic files, wherein the output
4 signal represents a future date and/or time, the
5 interactive response system being operative to trigger a
6 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
7 user and the voice recording system for recording of an

8 electronic file, the communication system associating the
9 electronic file with the future date and/or time and
10 being arranged to call a telephone associated with the
11 user on the date and/or time and play the electronic file
12 to the user.

1 17. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein
2 the output signal represents one of: a television
3 broadcast, a banner overlying a television broadcast, a
4 web page or an information page.

1 18. A communication system according to claim 17,
2 wherein the interactive response system is operative to
3 trigger a telephone call between a telephone associated
4 with the user and a telephone system associated with the
5 output signal.

1 19. A communication system according to claim 17,
2 wherein the interactive response system is operative to
3 transmit a request to the remote third party, the request
4 comprising information on a content of the output signal
5 and information on the user, wherein the remote third
6 party uses the information to communicate with the user
7 about the content.

1 20. A communication system according to claim 19,
2 wherein the request is communicated electronically to a
3 computer system associated with the output signal.

1 21. A communication system according to claim 19,
2 wherein the request is an email to a computer system
3 associated with the output signal.

1 22. A communication system according to claim 19,
2 wherein the remote third party communicates with the user
3 via one of: email, post or via a telephone call.

1 23. An interactive response method for a digital
2 television system, comprising:
3 accepting an input from a user in response to an output
4 signal produced by a television of the digital
5 television system; and
6 triggering a communication between the user and a remote
7 third party, wherein the communication is dependent
8 upon the output signal produced by the television.

1 24. A method according to claim 23, wherein the step of
2 accepting comprises receiving the input at a set-top-box
3 arranged to communicate with the digital television
4 system.

1 25. A method according to claim 24, wherein the step of
2 triggering comprises:
3 communicating details of the output signal from the set-
4 top-box to a processing system;
5 determining at the processing system the communication
6 to be triggered in dependence on the output signal;
7 and
8 initiating the communication.

1 26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the
2 step of determining further comprises determining a type
3 of communication in dependence on the output signal.

1 27. A method according to claim 25, wherein the
2 step of determining further comprises determining content
3 of the communication in dependence on the output signal.

1 28. A method according to claim 25, wherein the step of
2 communicating comprises communicating via one of a
3 communication network, a public service telephone
4 network, a cable system, a digital satellite television
5 system, a digital terrestrial television system, and a
6 broadband network.

1 29. A method according to claim 24, further comprising
2 downloading computer program code corresponding to the
3 interactive response method into the set-top-box upon
4 first use of the input by a user.

1 30. A method according to claim 24, wherein the output
2 signal represents one of: an email, an electronic address
3 book, and a voicemail message.

1 31. A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of
2 triggering a communication comprises: triggering a
3 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
4 user and a voice recording system for recording of an
5 electronic file; and transmitting the electronic file as
6 an attachment to an email to the sender of the output
7 signal.

1 32. A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of
2 triggering a communication comprises triggering a
3 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
4 user and a telephone associated with the sender of the
5 output signal.

1 33. A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of
2 triggering a communication comprises a telephone call

3 between a telephone associated with the user and a
4 voicemail system.

1 34. A method according to claim 24, wherein the output
2 signal represents a future date and/or time, the step of
3 triggering comprising:

4 triggering a telephone call between a telephone
5 associated with the user and a voice recording system
6 for recording of an electronic file;

7 associating the electronic file with the future date
8 and/or time; and

9 calling a telephone associated with the user on the date
10 and/or time and playing the electronic file to the
11 user.

1 35. A method according to claim 24, wherein the output
2 signal represents one of: a television broadcast, a
3 banner overlying a television broadcast, a web page, and
4 an information page.

1 36. A method according to claim 35, wherein the step of
2 triggering a communication comprises triggering a
3 telephone call between a telephone associated with the
4 user and a telephone system associated with the output
5 signal.

1 37. A method according to claim 35, wherein the step of
 2 triggering a communication comprises generating a request
 3 the request comprising information on a content of the
 4 output signal and information on the user, and
 5 transmitting the request to the remote third party,
 6 wherein the remote third party uses the information to
 7 communicate with the user about the content.

1 38. A method according to claim 37, wherein the step of
 2 transmitting the request to the remote third party
 3 comprises communicating the request electronically to a
 4 computer system associated with the output signal.

1 39. A method according to claim 37, wherein the step of
 2 transmitting the request to the remote third party
 3 comprises sending the request as an email to a computer
 4 system associated with the output signal.

1 40. A method according to claim 37, wherein the remote
 2 third party communicates with the user via one of: email,
 3 post, and a telephone call.

1 41. A computer readable medium, on which is stored a
 2 computer program of instructions for a general purpose

3 computer for an interactive response system for a digital
4 television system, comprising, in combination:

5 means for enabling the computer to accept an input from
6 a user in response to an output signal produced by a
7 television of the digital television system; and

8 means for enabling the computer to trigger a
9 communication between the user and a remote third
10 party, wherein the communication is dependent upon
11 the output signal produced by the television.

1 42. A computer program according to claim 41, wherein
2 the means for enabling the computer to trigger a
3 communication comprises:

4 means for enabling the computer to communicate details
5 of the output signal to a processing system;

6 means for enabling the processing system to determine
7 the communication to be triggered in dependence on
8 the signal; and

9 means for enabling the processing system to instigate
10 the communication.

1 43. A computer program according to claim 41, further
2 comprising means for enabling the computer to download a
3 remainder of the computer program upon first use of the
4 input by a user.

1 44. A computer program according to claim 36, wherein
2 the output signal represents one of: an email, an
3 electronic address book, and a voicemail message.

1 45. A program storage device readable by a machine and
2 encoding a program of instructions for executing the
3 method steps of claim 23.

1 46. A computer system adapted to provide an interactive
2 response system comprising:

3 a processor, and

4 a memory including software instructions adapted to
5 enable the computer system to perform operations
6 comprising:

7 accepting an input from a user in response to an
8 output signal produced by a television of a
9 digital television system; and

10 triggering a communication between the user and a
11 remote third party, wherein the communication is
12 dependent upon the output signal produced by the
13 television.

1 47. A computer program product for enabling a computer
2 to provide an interactive response system for a digital
3 television system comprising software instructions for

4 enabling the computer to perform predetermined
5 operations, and a computer readable medium bearing the
6 software instructions, the predetermined operations
7 including:

8 accepting an input from a user in response to an output
9 signal produced by a television of a digital
10 television system; and
11 triggering a communication between the user and a remote
12 third party, wherein the communication is dependent
13 upon the output signal produced by the television.